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Inspection of Eagle Pass and Laredo, Tex.

GALVESTON, TEX., October 6, 1899.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith the reports of my inspection of the stations at Eagle Pass and Laredo, Tex., under the direction of acting assistant surgeons, Lea Hume and H. J. Hamilton. * * *

Respectfully, yours,

C. T. PECKHAM,
Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.

Inspection of Eagle Pass.

GALVESTON, TEX., October 5, 1899.

SIR: In consonance with orders contained in Bureau letter (J. W. B.) of the 20th ultimo, I have the honor to state that I started from Galveston, Tex., September 26, and arrived at Eagle Pass, Tex., September 27, 1899, at 5.20 p. m.

September 28, at 9 o'clock a. m., I went to the office of the collector of customs, Mr. C. C. Drake. The collector was in his office. He informed me that Act. Asst. Surg. Lea Hume was at Presidio, Tex., 600 miles up the Rio Grande. The nearest point to him by railroad was 200 miles from the smallpox camp, and this distance would have to be made on horseback.

The collector informed me that Dr. Hume had reported to him that there were at least 1,500 cases of smallpox in Presidio County. The collector said he had exceeded his authority, but he had induced the sheriff of the county to forbid the opening of the public schools until the epidemic of smallpox had been stamped out.

The collector said that along the Rio Grande, where there were villages or cities on opposite sides of the river, Mexicans who had been exposed to smallpox were constantly crossing into Texas. Some had crossed in whom smallpox was in the eruptive stage, and were walking about the village into which they had come. They were returned to Mexico unless near a smallpox camp or pesthouse, in which case they were cared for on the Texas side of the river. He had 10 guards stationed along the river, 2 at each of 5 towns on the Texas side of the river. There were 2 at Presidio, 2 at Reidoso, 2 at Condalaria, 2 at San Antonio, and 2 at Pinto Canyon. These were mounted guards, and rode every day from 15 to 20 miles above and the same distance below the towns. They furnish their own horses and feed for them. They are paid \$3.50 per day.

The collector has 4 guards at Eagle Pass, Tex.; 1 at the railroad bridge, 1 at the footbridge, and 2 at the camp. He also has 1 guard at Del Rio, making in all 15 guards. The guard at Del Rio is a Mexican by birth, but an American citizen, and receives \$2 per day.

Mr. Jenkins has charge of the train inspection during Dr. Hume's absence. He has no pay from the Service. He is an intelligent appearing man, and has had a great deal of experience in this kind of work while with Dr. Hume. I think he is a customs inspector; at least he wears that uniform.

The collector of customs has the meals sent to the camp at the rate of 25 cents per meal. Many days there will be no one in the camp except the 2 workmen. If the meals were cooked at the camp it would necessitate the hiring of a cook and an assistant, the purchase of a camp cooking equipment, and the building of a storeroom that could be locked. The water used at the camp has to be brought a mile in barrels.